

# PSALMS

THE SONG-BOOK OF THE BIBLE



# AUTHORSHIP & OTHER FACTS

- \* “Psalm” comes from a Greek word “Psalmos” which means "a song sung to the accompaniment of a musical instrument."
- \* In the Hebrew Bible it is named “**Tehillim**” which means “**Book of Praises**”
- \* It is the 2nd book in the “Poetical Books” of the Bible
- \* The Book of Psalms is a collection of prayers, poems, and hymns
  - \* 73 Psalms: written by David
  - \* 11 Psalms: written by Korah (42, 44 - 49, 84-85,87-88)
  - \* 12 Psalms: written by Asaph (50) and (73 - 83)
  - \* 2 Psalms: written by Solomon (72 & 127)
  - \* 1 Psalm: written by Moses (90)
  - \* 1 Psalm: written by Heman (88)
  - \* 1 Psalm: written by Ethan the Ezrahite (89)
  - \* 50 Psalms: written by Anonymous writers
- \* **DATE:** Written across a 1000-year period (from Moses to an Anonymous writer in Babylonian Captivity)
- \* Compiled by an unknown editor after the end of Babylonian Captivity
- \* **CHAPTERS:** 150
- \* **VERSES:** 2,461



# THE SECTIONS WITHIN "PSALMS"

- \* **BOOK OF PSALMS - A NEW TORAH (Resembling the 5 Books of Moses)**
- \* The Psalms were catalogued into five books, that it might be a second Pentateuch.
  - \* BOOK 1 (Psalms 1-41)
  - \* BOOK 2 (Psalms 42-72)
  - \* BOOK 3 (Psalms 73-89)
  - \* BOOK 4 (Psalms 90-106)
  - \* BOOK 5 (Psalms 107-150)
- \* The final verse(s) of every book/section ends with AMEN!
- \* **Book.1** - Psalm 41:13 - "*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel From everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen.*"
- \* **Book.2** - Psalm 72:18-20 - "*18 Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, Who only does wondrous things! 19 And blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen. 20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.*"
- \* **Book.3** - Psalm 89:52 - "*Blessed be the Lord forevermore! Amen and Amen.*"
- \* **Book.4** - Psalm 106:48 - "*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel From everlasting to everlasting! And let all the people say, 'Amen!' Praise the Lord!*"



# 7 KINDS OF PSALMS

1. Hymns
2. Laments
3. Thanksgiving Psalms
4. Psalms of Confidence
5. Psalms of Remembrance
6. Wisdom Psalms
7. Kingship Psalms



# THE “SINGING” TRADITION OF PSALMS

- \* **King David:** He was the first to organize the musicians in the temple and to incorporate psalms into Israel's temple worship. (See 1 Chronicles 16.7-36 (which quotes Psalm 105.1-15), where David first assigned and organized the singing of psalms at the temple.)
- \* The order of Levites who ministered before the ark of the Lord:<sup>5</sup>
  - \* Asaph, the chief
  - \* Next to him Zechariah
  - \* *Then* Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, and Obed-Edom
  - \* Jeiel: stringed instruments and harps
  - \* Asaph: cymbals
  - \* Benaiah and Jahaziel: Trumpets



# THE "SINGING" TRADITION OF PSALMS

- \* King Solomon used the psalms during the dedication of the temple (2 Chronicles 5.7-14).
- \* King Jehoshaphat encouraged his armies through an exhortation of psalms (2 Chronicles 20.20-21).
- \* King Hezekiah used the psalms of David and Asaph (2 Chronicles 29.30).
- \* King Josiah: During the great Passover of Josiah, the psalms of David were used (2 Chronicles 35.15).
- \* Zerubbabel: Even after the return of Israel from the Babylonian captivity, Zerubbabel celebrated the rebuilding of the foundation of the temple with psalms according to the directions of King David (Ezra 3.10-11).
- \* Nehemiah: When the rebuilt wall of Jerusalem was dedicated, Nehemiah had the priests sing psalms according to the command of David and his son Solomon (Nehemiah 12.27-29, 45-46).
- \* The temple of Jerusalem and the psalms were closely related.
- \* Although the temple was destroyed, the songs of redemption continued to be remembered and sung by the Israelites.



# THE “SINGING” TRADITION OF PSALMS

- \* And today in the church, which is the temple of the living God, those same songs still continue to express the pain, joy, and hope of all believers

- \* **Jesus and His disciples had the habit of singing.**

**Matthew 26:30** - And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

- \* **The Apostles had the habit of singing - even in adversity**

**Acts 16:25** - But at midnight ***Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God***, and the prisoners were listening to them.

- \* **The New Testament Church had the habit of singing.**

**Ephesians 5:19** - speaking to one another ***in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart*** to the Lord

**Colossians 3:16** - Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, ***teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts*** to the Lord

**James 5:13** - Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. ***Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.***



# THE PURPOSE OF THE PSALMS

- \* The Psalms were designed to be a) **sung as joyful songs** (1 Chronicles 15.16), b) to **praise the Lord** (1 Chronicles 23.5, 30), c) to **sing a Prayer** and d) to **prophecy through the words and music** (1 Chronicles 25.1, 3).
  - \* In **Psalms 150** - "Praise" is mentioned 13 times in 6 verses
  - \* **Where should Praise Happen?** Earth & Heaven
  - \* **What should Praise include?** For what He does, Who is Is
  - \* **How should praise be expressed?** With instruments, with breath
  - \* Psalm 117, is the middle chapter of the Bible
  - \* Psalm 103:1-2 being the 15551st and 15552nd verses is in the middle of the 31102 verses of the Bible.
- Psalm 103:1-2** - 1 Bless the Lord, O my soul; And all that is within me, *bless* His holy name!  
2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits:



# TITLES IN THE BOOK OF PSALMS

Nearly all the Psalms have prefixed titles. They designate the following:

- (1) The Author, or perhaps more strictly, the collection from which the Psalm was taken,
- (2) The Historical Occasion for which it was written or which it illustrates.
- (3) Its Liturgical use,
- (4) The Character (style) of the Poem,
- (5) The Musical Setting or related Information

## **(1) THE AUTHOR OF THE PSALM**

- \* In 73 Psalms: A Psalm of David
- \* In 11 Psalms: A Psalm of Korah (42, 44-49, 84-85, 87-88)
- \* In 12 Psalms: A Psalm of Asaph and his family (50) and (73—83)
- \* In 2 Psalms: A Psalm of Solomon (72 & 127)
- \* 1 Psalm: A Psalm Moses the man of God (90)
- \* 1 Psalm: A Psalm of Heman (88)
- \* 1 Psalm: A Psalm of Ethan the Ezrahite (89)



# TITLES OF THE PSALMS

## (2) THE HISTORICAL OCCASION OF THE PSALM

The Titles describing the occasion of the Psalm can be found in the 13 Psalms of David.

### a. PSALMS WRITTEN DURING HIS PERSECUTION

- \* **Psalm 7.** A Meditation of David, which he sang to the Lord concerning the words of Cush, a Benjamite.
- \* **Psalm 59.** A Michtam of David when Saul sent men, and watched the house in order to kill him.
- \* **Psalm 56.** A Michtam of David when the Philistines captured him in Gath.
- \* **Psalm 34.** A *Psalm* of David when he pretended madness before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed.
- \* **Psalm 57.** A Michtam of David when he fled from Saul into the cave.
- \* **Psalm 142.** A Prayer when he was in the cave.
- \* **Psalm 54.** A Contemplation of David when the Ziphites went and said to Saul, "Is David not hiding with us?"



# TITLES OF THE PSALMS

## b. PSALMS WRITTEN DURING HIS CLIMAX

**Psalm 18** - A Psalm of David the servant of the Lord, who spoke to the Lord the words of this song on the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul.

## c. PSALMS WRITTEN AFTER THE SYRIAN - AMMONITE WAR

**Psalm 60** - A Michtam of David. For teaching. When he fought against Mesopotamia and Syria of Zobah, and Joab returned and killed twelve thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt.

## d. PSALMS WRITTEN AFTER HE SINNED

**Psalm 51** - A Psalm of David when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

## e. PSALMS WRITTEN DURING THE MUTINY OF ABSALOM

**Psalm 3** - A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son.

**Psalm 63** - A Psalm of David when he was in the wilderness of Judah



# TITLES OF THE PSALMS

## (3) THE LITURGICAL USE OF THE PSALM (FOR PARTICULAR OCCASIONS)

During the 2nd Temple period, each day of the week had a special Psalm, sung at the offering of the morning sacrifice

### (i) PSALMS FOR 7 DAYS OF THE WEEK -

In Jewish Tradition, one Psalm is attributed to every day of the week, except Psalm 92 which is sung on the Sabbath Day.

---

\* Psa. 24 is assigned to the first day of the week

---

\* Psa. 48 is assigned to the second day

---

\* Psa. 82 is assigned to the third day

---

\* Psa. 94 is assigned to the fourth day

---

\* Psa. 81 is assigned to the fifth day

---

\* Psa. 93 is assigned to the sixth day of the week

---

\* Psa. 92 : A SONG FOR THE SABBATH DAY

### (ii) PSALMS FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS

a. Psalm. 38 and 70 to bring to remembrance, sung at the **offering of incense**

b. Psalm 100, A Psalm of thanksgiving - sung when **thank-offerings** were offered.

c. Psalm 30 A Song at the Dedication of the House - used at the **Festival of the Dedication**

d. 15 Psalms (120 - 134) - **A Song of the Ascents**

“To go up” was the regular term for making pilgrimage to Jerusalem at the great festivals (Psalm. 122:4). the pilgrims went up with singing (Is. 30. 29; Ps. 42.4),



# TITLES OF THE PSALMS

## (4) CHARACTER OF THE POEM

### a. PSALM (Mizmor - Heb.)

- \* It is prefixed to 57 Psalms
- \* Usually along with the name of the author, generally that of David.
- \* Mizmor means a piece of music, a. song with instrumental accompaniment,

### b. SONG (Shir - Heb.)

- \* rendered song, - the general term for a song or canticle.
- \* It occurs 30 times in the titles,

### c. MASCHIL

- \* Meditative Psalm
- \* found as the title of 13 Psalms - Psalm 74

### d. PRAYER -

- \* title of five Psalms - 17,86

### e. PRAISE - Title of 1 Psalm - 145



# TITLES OF THE PSALMS

## (5) INFORMATION PERTAINING TO MUSIC

- \* "To the chief Musician" - prefixed to 55 Psalms
- \* To Jeduthun (62, 67) - Ps. 39 Jeduthun appears to be named as the chief musician intended.
- \* **"SELAH" - "Pause and Think"** - The word is found 71 times  
*Selah is a technical term giving direction to the musicians to strike up, either with a louder accompaniment, or with an interlude while the singing ceased.*

## MUSICAL NOTATIONS

- \* On Neginoth (Psalm 61) - on stringed instruments
- \* Upon Nehiloth (Psalm 5) - wind instruments
- \* Upon Alamoith - Psalm 46 - For maidens voices / soprano
- \* Upon Sheminith - Psalm 6,12 - On 8-string harp
- \* Upon Gittith - Psalm 8, 81, 84 - some Gittite instrument : 'the harp which David brought from Gath'



# **"THE PSALMS" REFLECTS THE WHOLE BIBLE**

## **1. "THE PSALMS" REFLECTS THE LAW**

The Psalmists celebrate the Mosaic law as the guide of human conduct

## **2. "THE PSALMS" REFLECTS THE HISTORY OF THE BIBLE**

- \* History of God's People before bondage in Egypt, The Exodus in the wilderness, The Occupation of Caanan , Exile and the Return.
- \* The recollection of the past serves as:
  - (i) A reminder of God's goodness
  - (ii) the support of faith in the hour of trial,
  - (iii) the ground of comfort in times of calamity.
  - (iv) a warning for the present,

## **3. THE BOOK REFLECTS THE WISDOM OF THE BIBLE**

- \* The moral lessons for every-day life collected in the Book of Proverbs, and the discussion of the problems of the world in Job and Ecclesiastes, find their echo in the poetry of the Psalms.
- \* There is no Contradiction



# "THE PSALMS" REFLECTS THE WHOLE BIBLE

## 4. THE BOOK REFLECTS THE PROPHECIES OF THE BIBLE

- \* David's chief musicians, Heman, Asaph and Jeduthun, are called 'seers'
- \* Moreover David and the captains of the army separated for the service some of the sons of Asaph, of Heman, and of Jeduthun, **who should prophesy with harps, stringed instruments, and cymbals.** (1 Chronicles 25:1)
- \* The constant use of the Psalms for devotion and worship familiarised people with the coming Messiah.
- \* Expectation was aroused and kept alive. Hope became part of the national life.
  - (1) some Psalms pointed forward to the Messiah as Son of God and King and Priest
  - (2) some prepared the way for the suffering Redeemer -not only for a triumphant King, but for a suffering Saviour.
  - (3) some portrayed the perfect Son of Man
  - (4) others foretold the Advent of Christ Himself to judge and redeem.
- \* **God's provision of a Savior for His people is a recurring theme in the Psalms.**
- \* [Psalm 2:1-12](#) portrays the Messiah's triumph and kingdom.
- \* [Psalm 22](#) - detailed prophecies of the crucifixion of the Messiah on the Cross, all of which were fulfilled perfectly.
- \* [Psalm 16:8-11](#) foreshadows His death and resurrection.
- \* [Psalm 45:6-7](#), exhibits the glories of the Messiah and His bride
- \* [Psalms 72:6-17](#), [89:3-37](#), [110:1-7](#) and [132:12-18](#) present the glory and universality of His reign.



# MESSIANIC PROPHECIES IN "THE PSALMS"

| Reference in Psalms | New Testament Reference | Prophecy regarding Jesus the Messiah        |
|---------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Psalms 78:2         | Matthew 13:34           | He would speak in parables                  |
| Psalms 118:22       | Matthew 21:42           | Would be rejected by men                    |
| Psalms 41:9         | John 13: 18:27          | Would be betrayed by a friend               |
| Psalms 22:16        | John 20:20-25           | Hands and feet would be pierced             |
| Psalms 69:21        | Matthew 27:34           | Gal and vinegar would be offered to Him     |
| Psalms 22:18        | Matthew 27:35           | Lots would be cast for His garments         |
| Psalms 22:7 - 8     | Matthew 27:43           | Would be laughed and scorned                |
| Psalms 22:1         | Matthew 27:46           | "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" |
| Psalms 31:3         | Luke 23:46              | Committed Himself to God                    |
| Psalms 34:20        | John 19: 33,36          | Bones were not broken                       |
| Psalms 22:14        | John 19:34              | Blood and water came out                    |
| Psalms 16:8 - 11    | Acts 2:25 - 31; 13:37   | Would be resurrected                        |
| Psalms 110:1, 4     | Matthew 22:42 - 44      | Would be priest and king                    |
| Psalms 72:7 - 8, 11 | Hebrews 2:8 - 9         | His glorious reign                          |



# POETIC STYLES

## 3 MAJOR POETIC STYLES IN THE PSALMS

**(1) Synonymous parallelism:** when the same fundamental thought is repeated in different words in the second line of a couplet.

***Psa. 114: 1:** " When Israel went forth out of Egypt, The house of Jacob from a people of strange language:"*

**(2) Antithetic or Contrasted parallelism:** when the thought expressed in the first line of a couplet is affirmed by its opposite in the second line.

***Psalms 1:6 -** " For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous : But the way of the wicked shall perish"*

**(3) Alphabetic or Acrostic Psalms:** Eight or nine Psalms present various forms of alphabetic structure (Pss. 9, 10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145).



# PSALM 119

- Each line (verse) begins with the stanza's Hebrew letter, and each line is tied thematically to the Hebrew letter pictographically.

---

1. Aleph - א

---

---

2. Bet - ב

---

---

3. Gimel - ג

---

---

4. Dalet - ד

---

---

5. Hey - ה

---

---

6. Vav - ו

---

---

7. Zayin - ז

---

---

8. Chet - ח

---

---

9. Tet - ט

---

---

10. Yod - י

---

---

11. Kaph - כ

---

---

12. Lamed - ל

---

---

13. Mem - מ

---

---

14. Nun - נ

---

---

15. Samek - ס

---

---

16. Ayin - ע

---

---

17. Pey - פ

---

---

18. Tzaddi- צ

---

---

19. Quph - ק

---

---

20. Resh - ר

---

---

21. Shin - ש

---

---

22. Tav - ת

---

- There are **176 lines** which are **grouped in eights**.
- **HEBREW ALPHABET: 22 letters = 22 stanzas of 8 lines each = 176 lines (verses).**
- The writer may have been suggesting that '**all the possibilities of human language are exhausted in setting forth the fullness and perfection of the Word of God.**'



# PSALM 119

- We have a **similar suggestion in the NT**.
- Our Lord speaks of Himself as the Alpha and Omega (Rev. 1:8).
- These are, of course, the first and last words of the Greek alphabet.
- The thought is that He is everything of goodness and perfection that can be expressed by every letter of the alphabet, arranged in every possible combination.
- **Psalms 119 has one overall theme: God's word.**
- There is no other chapter that Celebrates and Decorates the Word of God such as this chapter.
- God's Word is mentioned 173 times in 7 different ways in this Psalm

## THE WORD OF GOD IS REFERRED TO IN PSALM 119 BY 7 DIFFERENT TERMS:

### (1) Law

vs.1 - Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.

- used 25x
- has the nuance of "teaching"; it can refer to a single command, to the first five books of Moses, or to all of Scripture (John 15:25; 1 Cor. 14:21).



## **(2) Testimonies**

v.2 - Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.

- used 10x
- from a root meaning "to bear witness."

## **(3) Precepts**

v. 4 - Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently.

- used 21x
- points to the particular instructions of the Lord, as of one who cares about detail"

## **(4) Statutes**

v.5 - O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes

- used 22x
- comes from a word meaning "to engrave in stone"
- the binding force and permanence of Scripture



## **(5) Commandments**

v.6 - Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.

- used 22x
- points to the idea of giving orders.

## **(6) Judgments or ordinances**

vs. 13 With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.

- used 23x
- has the idea of justice rooted in God's character.

## **(7) Word**

v.9 - Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

- used 42x
- the most general term of all, emphasizing the fact that God has spoken.



# THE WORD OF GOD MAGNIFIED

**Psalm 138:2b "...For You have magnified Your word above all Your name."**

**Psalm 119:72** - The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

Both poetry and music existed before David's time, in compositions such as Ex. 15 and Judg. 5.

- \* But with David a new era of religious poetry commenced.
- \* The personal element entered into it and became the instrument of the soul's communion with God.

**But genius and circumstances alone could not have produced the Psalms.**

**2 Samuel 23:1-2 -**

*"1 Now these are the last words of David. Thus says David the son of Jesse; Thus says the man raised up on high, The anointed of the God of Jacob, And the sweet psalmist of Israel: 2 "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue."*